Immigrants are a fundamental part of California, contributing to our economy and communities across regions and industries. Despite progress on many immigrant rights issues, California has yet to develop a comprehensive strategy for immigrant integration. It is critical to invest in resources to help overcome obstacles to citizenship or lawfully present status.

**The Demographics of Eligibility**

- **Citizenship:** Immigrants who are lawful permanent residents, and are usually longtime residents, may apply for naturalization.

- **DAPA (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents):** Parents of U.S. citizens, or Lawful Permanent Residents, who often are longtime residents of California, may qualify for relief from deportation and for work authorization.

- **DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals):** Persons who arrived in California at a young age and have been residents of California most of their lives may qualify for relief from deportation as well as a work permit.

**Breaking Down Barriers**

Immigrant communities often face roadblocks to reaching their civic potential. Addressing these challenges will help us move Californians forward.

**CHALLENGES**

- The fee for a single DACA / DAPA application is $465. The fee for a citizenship application is $680. For many families, especially those who submit multiple applications, the cost of the application and necessary legal support is simply unaffordable.

- Barriers to the application process could mean millions won’t access life-changing opportunities.

**SOLUTIONS**

- Invest in statewide coordination of DACA, DAPA, and citizenship education services.

- Partner with qualified non-profits to do outreach and provide legal assistance.

- Determine eligibility for work authorization to help access better jobs and encourage entrepreneurs to open new businesses.

**BENEFITS**

- Relief from deportation through DACA and DAPA could bring stability and security for millions of California families.

- As immigrants integrate, they strengthen our economic future by increasing their income, spending power, and level of homeownership.

- When one person benefits from access to healthcare and a stable job, it improves the mobility of the entire household.
States like Illinois and New York have recognized the positive impact of inclusive immigration policy on their states and have developed collaborative partnerships to ensure the successful integration of immigrants. Additionally, some cities and counties in California, such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Santa Clara, have been in the forefront of supporting programs to promote legal services, education and outreach, and civic engagement of immigrant communities.

It is in our best interest to build on local efforts and lead on a statewide collaborative approach to immigrant integration. In California, administrative relief is estimated to boost the state’s economy by $27.5 billion over the next ten years\(^1\), and could provide opportunities for stability and economic security critical to lifting children and families out of poverty.

**The Time is Now: California is Ready to Lead**

Providing state assistance for immigrants to apply for citizenship or a lawfully present status is the next step for our Golden State to take leadership on immigrant integration. Under the ONE California proposal, $20 million would be appropriated to develop a community-driven model to assist eligible immigrants apply for citizenship or deferred action. By leveraging partnerships with qualified non-profits with strong ties to immigrant communities, we can ensure that millions of Californians are set up to succeed.

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**Endnotes**

2. Ibid.